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SUBJECT: FLASH FLOODS HIT ERBIL PROVINCE

- [1](#)1. (U) This is an RRT Erbil cable.
- [1](#)2. (U) Summary: On October 31, up to five inches of rain fell in the Kurdistan Region resulting in flash flooding in several mountainous sub-districts, particularly in Erbil Province. A woman and her young child died, and 200 adobe houses were damaged or destroyed. The Governor of Erbil, Nawzad Hadi, visited the affected area, declared an emergency, and asked for help from the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG.) The Governorate and the NGO community are leading the relief efforts. The RRT is preparing a QRF grant and is arranging to visit the area. Flooding is common this time of year. End Summary.
- [1](#)3. (U) In the mountainous areas of the Kurdistan Region, deforestation, over-grazing, and erosion over the last 20 years have increased the instability of the soil and the probability of mudslides in the mountainous areas of the Kurdistan Region. Heavy rains on the night of October 31 lead to flash-flooding in the two sub-districts of Piran and Goratoo in the Mergasur District of Erbil Province. A 30-year old woman and her two year-old daughter were killed in the flooding. Another three individuals were injured. 200 adobe houses in the area were either damaged or destroyed, and several roads were made impassable by landslides. The Governor, who visited the area on Sunday, has declared the area in a state of emergency and assembled a committee of local government officials headed by the Mayor of Mergasur to coordinate relief efforts.
- [1](#)4. (U) As part of the initial response, local teams have started working on clearing the two main roads that were closed as well as repairing downed power lines. The Iraqi Red Crescent is providing non-food item (NFI) kits. The Mayor of Mergasur told the RRT that the displaced families will temporarily stay with other families. The KRG Ministry of Reconstruction will send a delegation to visit the area in the next few days. Once damage has been assessed, the ministry will create a plan for rebuilding the area. A delegation from President Barzani's office inspected the damage November 2. Local press reported on November 2 that Vice President Biden called President Barzani to discuss the election law and gave his condolences regarding the flooding victims.
- [1](#)5. (U) Humanitarian NGOs, including the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, the International Organization of Migration, and the International Committee of the Red Cross travelled to the area on November 2 to conduct needs assessments. RRT staff have been in contact with these NGOs, as well as with the Mayor of Mergasur and the Governor of Erbil. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees told RRT that it was providing 117 packages of non-food items, including hygiene kits, and discussing the possible need for tents with local officials. The RRT is in the process of preparing a Quick Response Fund grant, pending a list of needed items from the mayor's office. RRT Team leader and staff are arranging a visit to the area in the coming days.
- [1](#)6. (U) Comment. Fortunately, only a few localities experienced significant damage from the flash flooding, nor

were there large casualty numbers. Local press only started reporting on the flooding late November 1. Vice President Biden,s condolences, along with civilian and military U.S. offers of help are appreciate by local authorities. End Comment.
HILL